

or poor job of revitalizing downtown. On fixing roads the fair/poor rating was 78 percent and spending tax dollars was 70 percent fair/poor. On being responsive to the needs and priorities of Eugene residents, 71 percent rated the council fair or poor.

The survey did not ask what voters' top priorities are. Nor did the survey ask for favorability ratings about city staff. Under the direction of the city manager, staff are largely responsible for most city actions, including designing the survey. — Alan Pittman

DOWNTOWN CODE LIMITS SURFACE PARKING LOTS

After a developer's opinion piece in *The Register-Guard* claimed that "Eugene's development code, more than anything else, is strangling downtown" by making it "virtually impossible" to build anything, there have been increasing calls for repealing the regulations.

Mayor Kitty Piercy and Councilor Mike Clark have publicly said the city should examine the issue, and so have a half dozen letters to the editor at the daily paper.

But the downtown code is there for a reason, and throwing it out could leave downtown looking like a suburban mall parking lot, according to city staff and documents.

Chapter 9 of the Eugene code describes the purpose of downtown code provisions requiring denser development: "The development standards are designed to encourage compact urban growth ... reduced reliance on the automobile, and a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment, by insuring an attractive streetscape, a functional mix of complementary uses, and provision of amenities that support the use of transit, bicycles, and pedestrian facilities."

To accomplish those goals, the code requires at least two-story buildings completely filling

sites in the small downtown core and at least one-story buildings filling sites on the edge of downtown. The code's "floor area ratio" (FAR) requirements are flexible; for example, they allow a developer to satisfy requirements on the edge of downtown by building a two story building on half of her site. The code also restricts new surface parking lots in the core of downtown to a maximum of 20 spaces.

Prichard claimed in the *R-G* and in a subsequent KEZI-TV report that the current U.S. Bank tower, The Tate condominium project, Newman's fish shop and the proposed KWG and Beam redevelopment projects could not be built downtown now.

The U.S. Bank building meets the FAR requirement, but its large adjacent surface parking lot exceeds the 20-space limit, according to city planner Nan Laurence. The KEZI report did not mention that there is a large, half-full city parking garage directly across the street from the bank.

The Tate building satisfies current code for its location on the edge of downtown, according to Laurence. If it were built in the downtown core, it would exceed FAR requirements but violate the 20-surface parking space limit, she said.

The one-story Newman's fish market with surrounding surface parking filling its site would likely violate code provisions for the downtown core and edge of downtown if it were built now the same way. A two-story building on half the site with the rest in parking might meet the code in that location, according to code provisions.

The KWG and Beam downtown redevelopment and rehabilitation proposals would have met the current code requirements, according to Laurence.

The WestTown on 8th affordable housing project is now being completed downtown and meeting city code.

"There are regulations in our current land use code that are confusing and contradictory, and changes to those provisions could make downtown development easier," Laurence said in an email. She added that staff are now "work-

• **Holiday good wishes abound** in Eugene these days, and more than a few were expressed by a parade of gift-givers at City Club Dec. 14. The long list of virtual gifts included bringing the troops home from Iraq, sheltering the homeless, restoring the addicted, dispelling hate in the world with love, saving the Amazon headwaters, free parking downtown, recycling awareness and action, tango for everyone, a better attitude, scientific knowledge and the will to use it to benefit humanity, the gift of time to get to know each other, making Eugene a "Peace-Maker City," a new motto for Eugene: "A Great City for the Arts and Outdoors" and a strong ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) for UO footballer Dennis Dixon. Better late than never.

The guest speakers included John Attig, Alan Beck, George Evano, Felicity Fahy, Alder Fuller, David Funk, Lorraine Kerwood, Ev Marcel, Frank Nearing, Tunku Jigme Thrinley Rinpoche, Quinn Wilhelmi Reilly, Betty Snowden and Betty Taylor. Missed the program? Find it in the audio archives at KLCC (www.KLCC.org). Listening to these gifts is a good antidote for the less-than-joyful stresses of the holidays.

• The **Eugene City Council is wringing its hands** over the two recent failed votes and a negative post-election survey (see News Briefs). Conservatives hoping to unseat the centrist/progressive majority in coming elections argue that the negative feedback is a political right-turn signal from the voters. The truth is the opposite: The majority of people in Eugene don't want the city to become like every other city in America. That's why centrist and progressive candidates won in the last election and pro-sprawl interests lost. The problem today? Some of those centrist/progressives have forgotten why they were elected. They have pursued the city staff's unpopular agenda of corporate tax breaks, developer subsidies, bigger City Hall offices, parking garages and asphalt rather than the popular progressive interests.

• Letters about **"iAsk a Mexican!"** keep coming in, and we are hearing about a variety of groups around Lane County debating the virtues and failings of Gustavo Arellano. Book club or sewing circle getting boring? Add a little spice. After the holiday break, the provocative column might find its way into classroom discussions as well, if it hasn't already. Here are some suggested questions for "teachable moments":

How do the topics raised in "iAsk a Mexican!" relate to the national debate on immigration? Does this type of humor diminish or reinforce stereotypes? Are the issues facing local Latinos the same or different from issues facing Southern California Latinos? What *are* the local issues for Latino adults and children? Why is there a disparity of income between whites and non-whites in Lane County? What kinds of diversity can be found within the Latino communities? What are the generational differences? What are the preferred usages of terms such as Latino, Hispanic and Chicano?

Why does Eugene have so few people of color? What is the impact of Eugene's school choice system on the mixing of races and economic groups? What is the role of the police? Can privileged white people ever understand the experience of being a member of minority race in Eugene? Are white attitudes consistent with political leanings? Are diversity programs effective? Where do we get our personal racial and cultural prejudices, and how do we temper them?

We're not suggesting from on high; we have these talks too. And we're hoping that a variety of local Latino and Latina voices can participate in the discussions, specifically by writing columns for the *EW*. That's one gift we'd love to get for Yule.

• More than **28,000 U.S. military personnel** have been wounded badly enough in Iraq to require air evacuation, and many end up in long and painful rehabilitation. Regardless of how we might feel about Bush/Cheney and their illegal war, the wounded are not to blame. Here's a suggestion we've seen making the rounds. When you are making out your Christmas card list this year, think about sending one to: A Recovering American Soldier, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 6900 Georgia Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20307-5001.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

CURT AND CATHY BRODNER

For 18 years in Boulder, then Gunnison, Colo., Michigan natives Curt and Cathy Brodner ran a specialty machine shop and engineering firm. "Inventors came to us," says Curt Brodner. "We made their dreams reality." But when their younger daughter left for college in 1998, the Brodners sold the business, their house and possessions and flew to Madrid with a tandem bicycle and a Burley trailer. "We bicycled through 27 countries in two years," says Cathy. Stopping over in Thailand, they started several vocational projects in refugee camps, most notably a manufacturing facility for ceramic water filters, porous pottery bowls that filter out bacteria and protozoa. "Water-borne illness is the largest killer of children under age 5," says Curt, displaying one of the filters. The Brodners settled in Eugene early in 2005 but soon returned to Asia to distribute 6,000 filters to the region affected by the tsunami of December 2004. With funding from UNICEF, the Brodners established a filter factory in Myanmar in 2006. Another is planned for India in 2008. Learn more about the filters online (www.thirst-aid.org).



Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

• **Lane Vegetation Management Advisory Committee** (VMAC) has voted 6-2 in favor of spraying herbicides around guardrails and to eliminate noxious weeds instead of using manual or mechanical means of control. The vote was in defiance of the considerations for

health as mandated by the Lane Board of Health and the Last Resort Herbicide Use Policy. The issue will come before the Board of Commissioners as early as Jan. 2. Call your county commissioner at 682-4203 to register your concerns.